

SMD/2024/0109

Hi Chris,

Land Adjacent to Hurstons Lane, Alton, Staffordshire.

Objection.

The proposal is within the direct setting of Alton and Farley Conservation Area. There are no domestic dwellings or established pattern of development to this vicinity at the east of the Conservation Area. Few are seen later at Saltersford Lane to the south, though are very limited. The shape of the original core to the village, and piecemeal later development is limited to a north-south relationship, lying perpendicular to the River Churnet, Abbey Wood and Alton Cliffs (as denoted in first edition maps). Consequently forming this close-knit and collected feel to the vicinity as informed by the topography.

The heritage statement appraises the area to have survived as an early phase of growth relating to field networks and the settlement, a vernacular element for Moorlands villages. These primitive networks as organically developed comprising of Back Lane and to the south, hug the core of the village and extend out into a vast openness of fields and survived landscape.

The roads or lanes within this vicinity are demonstrated on 1887 first edition maps, and are shown to be one of the two primary routes south out of the core of Alton toward Nab Hill.

The proposal sees a low lying bungalow structure of a similar palette to the vernacular, at the east side of Back Lane. The scheme comprises some off street parking, but has a very limited plot to be able to provide suitable garden or thoroughly useable space. The lane is single track due to its age as noted, with tall mature trees on embankments, original and perhaps the medieval hedgerow layouts and a public footpath or bridleway running south across pastoral and grazing fields.

I am concerned that the scheme looks to be starkly against the established grain of the area and original core to the village. It looks to replace some modern dilapidated aviaries, except these are not domestic dwellings and as such I cannot see a precedent or tradition for dwellings in this setting. It would also be a concern to lose a substantial amount of hedgerow and risk the survival of trees forming this original boundary and lane, to accommodate construction and other site traffic. Domestic dwellings have not ever found a place here as demonstrated on maps, for little over two centuries.

Consequently, on assessment I do not believe the scheme falls faithful to the following Policy:
Policy DC1, Policy DC2, and Policy DC3.

Whilst the scheme does not concern listed buildings, a Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset. I believe the scheme is an intrusion onto the countryside, and falls against the character of the historic settlement and survived landscape. I am not confident it reinforces local distinctiveness or contributes positively, as per policy wording.

To conclude; due to this accumulation of conflict I assess there to be a negative impact on the setting and historic landscape of this vicinity, the sense of place and the way in which this area is experienced. I do not believe the scheme would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area contrary to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regard to the NPPF 2023, the harm would be less than substantial and I am not confident there is clear and convincing justification. It is not considered there are public benefits associated with this scheme that outweigh the heritage harm identified. I cannot provide full support and recommend refusal.

Thanks

Emily Holland. Principal Conservation Officer.

Development Services.

High Peak Borough Council / Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

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